

Secretary of Frivolous Affairs

by
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Illustrations by
V.L. BARNES

"You Poor Little Girl!" He exclaimed.

hour. I arose stiffly. I wasn't sure just what I should do or say; everything was muddled and queer. Mrs. Hazard caught John just as he was leaving the office and began talking to him about a detective, and Hap stood by the window, with his hands dug deep into his trousers pockets. Laura was searching a local telephone book for a number. I waited painfully, and when Mrs. Hazard released the wire Laura called Winthrop.

"I want to know if he's at home," she explained to us. "Of course he couldn't have been here without some one of us seeing him, but I want to make sure."

Winthrop himself answered her, and a minute later, after a foolish question, she hung up the receiver satisfied. My mind flew to the duke, but, as if in contradiction of my thought, I saw him coming from the beach with Jane Bliss. Against me this time was the silly circumstantial evidence.

"Does any one here believe I took that ruby?" I asked brokenly.

"You silly fool!" Laura exclaimed affectionately.

"My dear child," Mrs. Hazard came to me and took my hand in her own seriously and impressively—"I've never yet made a mistake in estimating a person. I was sure of you that first day I talked to you. I know you now, and I am more sure, even if I forget that you are Joshua Codman's daughter. There's something queer about all this—something we don't understand. Natalie began to lose her jewels one by one before she ever saw you. She's sure of her maid—"

"Resides, Minette wasn't at the reception," Laura interrupted.

"But we're going to find out who has taken those jewels, and I shall see that the rest are put in a safety vault, if I have to do it myself. I can't ask her to leave."

"If I could only see Jo," I pleaded, and I began to cry on Mrs. Hazard's bosom, with my tears splashing the lavender silk of her gown.

"Why not send for her?" she asked.

"Why, of course you want your sister. I'll ask her to come. There, don't cry. Give me the address again, dear. I'll telephone, if you don't think it will frighten her. She can come Wednesday. Shall I say a week? Now, get on your hat and go for a walk, or take the runabout if you wish. There! The trouble's all over. Don't think of it any more."

CHAPTER XII.

The Same Old Story.

I rattled across the lawn to the beach. I didn't want the runabout. I wanted to be away from everybody and everything and try to think. I felt terribly lonely. The roar of the waves smashing against the rocks brought me peace. Clouds were scurrying northward before a brisk wind, and the sun, gleaming through

I was nearly to the steps which led down from the rocks above to the sand when I realized that Hap was with me; he was panting, his face red from exertion.

"How do you do, Hap?" he complained.

"Wouldn't make Diana go hide her head in a sack. Wait for a fellow, won't you?"

I clattered down the steps and collapsed on the lower one. I couldn't speak, for I was all out of wind myself. We both sat looking out over the water, breathing hard.

"Do you believe that awful thing?" I managed to ask at last.

I wasn't in the least prepared for what happened. He seized me in his arms, and for the first time in my life a man's lips were pressed against my own.

"That's what I believe," he said, "and that—that!"

In the first shock of my surprise I let his lips rest against mine for a moment, then I gasped and put out my two hands and pushed. It was as if I were pushing against the Chinese wall. I forgot to remember that he was the best tackle Harvard ever had. He was smiling at me, and his lips threatened again; two tears brimmed from my eyes and splashed over.

"You poor little girl!" he exclaimed. "I frightened you. Please don't cry."

"How dare you?" I sobbed.

"Why, I forgot to tell you," he tried to kiss me again, but I pressed my face against his shoulder in desperation. "I love you. Put your arms around my neck, dear; there's not a soul in sight. Now whisper something to me—darling!"

I brought my head up suddenly. He was allowing Hap to hold me in his arms on an open beach. I looked up, and down, and out toward the water; no, there was not a soul in sight. The boats were deserted, the sand behind hid us completely from the house. I met his eyes, and there was that look in them I had never been able to take care of. I had to see it, while his lips were dangerously near and his arms held me close

for my hair; then five minutes to get to my room and five minutes—"

"Can't you coax Celia down to three minutes for your gown, and two minutes for your hair, and—come down a step lower, please, or our heads will be above the wall when I kiss you."

"You are not to kiss me again!" I gasped.

I gave my hand a pull; so did he. "Come down a step, darling. I'll not get another kiss for an hour—"

"You'll never get another," I interrupted. I tried to believe that.

"For an hour," he pursued stubbornly. "And you haven't told me the one thing in all the world I want to hear. There's a good girl!"

He was the strongest; I went down the next step to preserve my balance. There was no use struggling against a kiss; he was the best tackle Harvard ever had.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Department of Correspondence. I simply couldn't manage to dress in five minutes, although Celia, like the jewel she is, had put out the simplest gown Mrs. Hazard allowed me and began throwing my clothes at me the minute I appeared. I collapsed into a chair and she pulled the pins from my hair. My face was streaked with tear-stains where I had cried, my eyes were red, my nose worse.

Celia looked at me in despair while the clock ticked off the seconds fendishly—ticked off two minutes, to be exact—and chattered from the drawing-room flooded up to me through the open windows. That punctual dinner going would sound in just three minutes.

"Ah, Mademoiselle, you are ill!" Celia cried alarmed. "You have been crying. If you please, with Mademoiselle allow me the time for massage? Mademoiselle is most—"

"Yes, Celia, I'm a wreck," I interrupted in English, "and there's no woman in the world can dress in three minutes. Will you ask Mrs. Hazard to excuse me for this one evening—if she hasn't already gone down? Tell her I have a headache; my head does ache, Celia. Run! If she has gone down come back quickly and hook me every other hook and trust to luck. I'll do my hair while you're gone."

She was already across the corridor and I gave my hair a twist, a loop, stuck pins in, blessed the Lord for the curls he had given me, and tried to repair my damaged face with a smear of cold cream. I had always read of shining eyes and glowing cheeks after what I had just been through; when a man had given me his heart, and had kissed me into acknowledging that I loved him, besides making me promise all sorts of wonderful promises I knew I couldn't keep. I couldn't, I couldn't, I couldn't.

I began to cry again, but I didn't have time to cry. I winked back the

tears and smeared on more cream; Mrs. Hazard appeared.

"My dear child!" she exclaimed. "What is the matter? Celia says you are ill!"

"Oh, it's nothing, but I've been crying—as you know," I added hastily, "and I'm a fright, and I can't get dressed before that going sound. I don't feel like talking. Would it be too much to ask if I might have a headache and stay here for once?"

"Of course, you may," she replied sympathetically. "I should have been the one to suggest it. My dear, don't worry, don't—there's the gown! Send Celia for your dinner, and if you need me, send for me. Remember there's nothing to cry about."

She bustled out in her dear, fat way. I heard her speak to Hap in the corridor, and my fingers, smearing the cold cream, trembled against my face at the sound of his voice. He loved me; he loved me; he loved me! Suddenly something inside me gave way, either in my brain or my heart. I don't know which, and I went forward across my dressing-table, my greasy face against the dainty pink and white covering, and had a real cry, a jolly, sobbing, refreshing weep.

"Ah, Mademoiselle, see in so grand distress!" Celia exclaimed. "Mademoiselle is ill. Mademoiselle is nervous!"

I knew Celia was in "so grand distress" herself when she lapped into English. I sat up again, wiping the tears from my eyes and the grease from my face.

"Get me my dinner, Celia," I said between sobs. "I'm so hungry. I'll feel better when I eat something."

She looked at me astonished. She knew I was not quite hopeless as long as I was hungry.

"Mademoiselle will not faint!" she

inquired.

"I'll not faint unless you fail to come with the dinner," I assured her. "Now hurry!"

When the door closed upon her I looked into the mirror and smiled, not at what I saw there, although it was funny enough, but I smiled because—I closed my eyes ecstatically. He loved me; he had kissed me!

I sat there a long time, how long I don't know, dreaming. I had never allowed myself the luxury of such thoughts. I had pushed them back and trampled them down, and refused to listen. How dear was that expression about his mouth, and how beautiful his eyes! I loved the forelock! I had touched it! I covered my face suddenly. My throat was tight; I was suffocating with happiness.

I had loved him from the first. I knew that now. I wondered that I didn't realize my danger from the minute Mrs. Hazard made her proposal to me. I remembered perfectly how he had looked at me that first meeting; a silly, unromantic place it was—a crowded street, and I had wisps of hair dangling about my ears. Funny! Silly things like that to come sneaking into one's thoughts at such a time. I had learned the sound of the gray car; I admitted now that I had listened for it. I knew his step from the first. I knew, too, that he had always been near; and I had to talk baseball to him, it was part of my job. Baseball? Pshaw! An excuse. Natalie? Gracious, she never had a chance, after he saw me! I must not think that! How awful! But he had said so; his lips said so, his eyes said so. He loved me! And I cried about it to my heart's content.

I rose suddenly and went to the window, with my unfastened gown falling about me. I sank down and put my arms upon the casement. His mother must not know. I couldn't lose her love and trust. I'd have to tell Jo. Of course, I couldn't marry him; I knew that, knew it, knew it! Besides, Natalie had said I had taken her silly ruby. I must prove I didn't. But how? Jo would know. Poor Jo! She knew something was going to happen to me. She knew from the beginning I was going to fall in love with somebody!

The air was cool and salty and good against my hot face. Everything was still and the trees cast long, placid shadows on the grass from the dying sun. Vincent, tinkering with the engine of the limousine in the driveway below, was talking softly to Henri, the boy who looked after the tennis courts, but the conversation reached me plainly. Vincent was trying to speak French, and Henri trying to answer in English. Funny! The slang they used, although Henri expressed himself fully as well as his Grace. I could hear Winthrop yelling to a fisherman. A moment later a motor-boat sounded—Winthrop's boat—and a searchlight faintly pierced the fast-falling twilight.

I discarded the evening gown and put on the white flannel dress in which I played tennis. I knotted a blue scarf beneath the collar and tied a blue ribbon around my hair. He loved the ribbon; he had said so once. I wore it when I played tennis to keep the hair out of my eyes; now I put it on, trying to be a girl again, just as I was when Jo and I—I would not cry again!

One isn't quite broken-hearted when one can eat. I was finishing my coffee when Celia brought me a note. I knew I would read as she handed it to me. I wonder if I had expected it. I tried to speak casually.

"Thank you, Celia. I won't need you again tonight. You may go." I didn't dare open it while she was there.

"But Monsieur requests the answer, Mademoiselle."

"There's no answer, Celia," I said, without looking at it.

Celia hesitated, looked at me appealingly, and went out. Then I read my first love letter:

My Own:—The sun has gone out, the earth is a barren waste. I refuse to believe there will ever be light again until I can see you. Why did you not come down to dinner? Celia says you are ill; mother says it's because you didn't have time to dress. I'm a beast for keeping you. I have spoiled the evening. Are you really ill, darling? If it's the dress, won't you come now? I shall wait for you on the stairs. Impatiently. HAP.

I kissed the name—that dear, silly nickname—and put the letter in my bosom, over my heart. It was stiff and uncomfortable, and I wished he had made a happier choice of stationery, but it was very sweet there, over my heart. I watched the moon coming up, a rim of silver showing along the horizon, then a stream of light shimmering, dancing across the water. He was waiting on the stairs for me!

It was dreadfully stupid alone. Of course, no one would disturb me. "Are you ill, darling?" . . . Dorothy was playing the piano below. Gracious! Why didn't some one keep her from singing Sleepy Song so soon? She'd put everybody to raving. I knew then why I was necessary. I hoped my hands wouldn't get mixed. "If it's the dress, won't you come now?" . . . I surveyed myself in the mirror and shook my head. I couldn't go down; I didn't want to go. Natalie had said I was a thief! But he was waiting on the stairs for me, and that was heavenly!

Now, I always thought Celia an exception. She isn't. She's just like every other French maid. She takes a childish delight in anything that appears the least romantic or clandestine. She's a

To be continued.

FROM OUR EXCHANGES

GILLIAM

Mayor R. N. Ayres has taken possession of his livery barn again and has secured the services of A. V. Cross, who will look after the transfer department. Mr. Ayres intends to put in an automobile for livery hire.—The engagement of Harry Sellmeyer to Julia Ripberger of Howard County has been announced the marriage to take place some date during the latter part of the present month.—Miss Julia Jordan left Sunday night for Chicago, where she will attend school. Miss Julia is taking education and is very successful with it.—Globe.

Mail Carriers Will Fly

This is an age of great discoveries. Progress rides on the air. Soon we may see Uncle Sam's mail carriers flying in all directions, transporting mail. People take a wonderful in a discovery that benefits them. That's why Dr. King's New Discovery for Coughs, Colds and other throat and lung diseases is the most popular medicine in America. "It cured me of a dreadful cough," writes Mrs. J. F. Davis, Stickney Corner, Me., "after doctor's treatment and all other remedies had failed." For coughs, colds or any bronchial affections unequalled. Price 50c and \$1.00 per bottle. Trial bottle free at P. H. Franklin's.

SLATER

Lou's Fels had the misfortune to fall on the slippery sidewalk Sunday afternoon and sprained his ankle, which has given him considerable pain and kept him confined to his home several days.—Born to Wm. Branscom and wife Monday, Jan. 6, a nine pound girl.—Dr. Snoddy reports a ten pound boy at the home of A. R. Henry on the 4th of January.—Dr. J. C. Bucher, who returned last week from Virginia, says he had the pleasure of being at the home-coming celebration of President-elect Wilson at Stanton Va.—News.

Insect Bite Costs Leg

A Boston man lost his leg from the bite of an insect two years before. To avert such calamities from stings and bites of insects use Bucklen's Arnica Salve promptly to kill the poison and prevent inflammation, swelling and pain. It heals burns, boils, ulcers, piles, eczema, cuts, bruises. Only 25 cents at P. H. Franklin.

SLATER

Harry Laffoon, who clerks at R. C. Barkad's drug store, and Miss Lula Frazier, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Frazier, of Warrensburg, Mo., were united in marriage at Liberty, Mo., Sunday, December 29th. The young couple returned to Slater last week and at present are making their home at the residence of Postmaster Alexander Rustler.

SWEET SPRINGS

Miss Edith Clark of Belleville, Ill., has been the guest of her uncle, S. D. Clark, and family for the past three weeks. She returned to her home Wednesday.—Herald.

The Girl Who Hasn't Time to Talk

A telephone operator's duty is to listen to your number, repeat it, and forthwith to ring the bell of the party you want.

If she attempted to answer questions, you might have to wait when you call.

When questioned about changed telephone numbers, etc., she quickly transfers one to "Information."

Missouri & Kansas Telephone Co.

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It Helps!

Mrs. J. F. Daniels, of Sip, Ky., writes: "I was so sick for 3 or 4 years, I had to hire my work done, most of the time. I had given up hope. When I began to take Cardui, I knew, right away, it was helping me. Now, I am better than ever before in my life, and Cardui did it."

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Take CARDUI

The Woman's Tonic

Cardui has helped thousands of weak, tired, worn-out women, back to health. It has a gentle, tonic action on the womanly system. It goes to the cause of the trouble. It helps, it helps quickly, surely, safely. It has helped others. Why not you? It will. Try it. Get a bottle today!

The Choice of a Husband

is too important a matter for a woman to be handicapped by weakness, bad blood or foul breath. Avoid these kill-hops by taking Dr. King's Life Pills. Newtongh fine complexion, pure breath, cheerful spirits—things that win men follow their use. Easy, safe and sure. 25c at P. H. Franklin's.

MIAMI

Charles W. Surbaugh, seventy-one years old, died Monday morning at his home 1217 Indiana avenue, Kansas City, Mo. Mr. Surbaugh lived here for years but had not made this his home in the past quarter century. Since then he was in the milling business at Sumner, Mo. He was a member of the G. A. R.—News.

What Makes a Woman

One hundred and twenty pounds, more or less, of bone and muscle don't make a woman. It's a good foundation. Put into it health and strength and she may rule a kingdom. But that's just what Electric Bitters give her. Thousands bless them for overcoming fainting and dizzy spells and for dispelling the weakness, nervousness, backache and tired, listless, worn-out feeling "Electric Bitters have done me a world of good," writes Eliza Pool, Depew, Okla. "and I thank you, with all my heart, for making such a good medicine." Only 50c. Guaranteed by P. H. Franklin.

EXECUTOR'S NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Letters Testamentary on the estate of Andrew J. McRoberts, deceased, were granted in the undersigned, on the 15th day of January, 1913, by the Probate Court of Saline County, Missouri.

All persons having claims against said estate are required to exhibit them to them for allowance within six months after the date of said letters, or they may be precluded from any benefit of such estate; and if such claims be not exhibited within one year from the date of the last insertion of the publication of this notice they shall be forever barred.

Benjamin L. McRoberts, Executor.
Alexander B. McRoberts, Executor.
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